

## Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 EB-07 SSO-00 /016 W

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O 131524Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0121

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, IV

SUBJ: MAJOR PROJECT: AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CENTRAL SWITCHING  
OFFICES

REF: STATE 224629

1. CHARGE AND ECON COUNSELOR MET SEPT 13 WITH REPRESENTA-  
TIVES OF NORTH ELECTRIC COMPANY, WHICH HAS BEEN BIDDING ON  
CENTRAL SWITCHING OFFICES CONTRACT. THIS CONTRACT IS PART  
OF LARGE TELECOMMUNICATION INSTALLATION IN IVORY COAST WHICH  
WILL INVOLVE OVER \$100 MILLION THROUGH TEN-YEAR PERIOD.  
FIRST TRANCHE OF \$53 MILLION IS TO BE COMPLETED IN FIVE-  
YEAR PERIOD. IBRD IS ASSISTING IN FINANCING OF FIRST TRANCHE  
IN THE AMOUNT OF \$25 MILLION.

2. BIDS WERE SUBMITTED FOR SWITCHING OFFICE CONTRACT IN  
FEBRUARY 1976. NORTH ELECTRIC HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT  
ITS BID, INVOLVING ABOUT \$15 MILLION OF SWITCHING  
OFFICES IN LARGER COMMUNITIES, WOULD BE ACCEPTED.  
IVORIAN DAILY FRATERNITE MATIN PUBLISHED SEPT 3 STATE-  
MENT FROM PTT THAT CONTRACT HAD BEEN AWARDED TO FRENCH  
FIRM CGCT. NORTH REPRESENTATIVES LEARNED INFORMALLY  
THAT FRENCH BID WOULD COST GOIC AT LEAST FIFTY PER CENT  
MORE THAN THE NORTH BID. FRENCH REPORTEDLY "SWEETENED"  
BID BY OFFERING TO BUILD FACTORY FOR MANUFACTURE TELE-  
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT IN IVORY COAST.

3. NORTH REPRESENTATIVES NOTED THAT IBRD REGULATIONS  
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REQUIRE CAREFUL SCRUTINY OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING. THEY

BELIEVE THAT IBRD WILL REFUSE FINANCIAL PACKAGE SHOULD UNECONOMIC FRENCH BID BE ACCEPTED. IT IS NORTH'S UNDERSTANDING THAT IVORIAN DECISION IS NOT YET FINAL BUT MAY BE MADE AS EARLY AS SEPT 16.

4. EMBASS IS PREPARED TO APPROACH PTT ASKING WHETHER BID HAS BEEN FINALIZED. CLEARLY, HOWEVER, MOST EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION WOULD BE FROM IBRD. LOCAL IBRD REP IS AWARE OF PROBLEM, BUT TOLD CHARGE DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY HEAD OFFICE IN WASHINGTON.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST DEPARTMENT URGENTLY CONTACT IBRD IN WASHINGTON TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER IBRD AUTHORITIES AWARE OF PRELIMINARY GOIC DECISION TO AWARD CONTRACT TO FRENCH FIRM AND WHETHER FRENCH BID IS INDEED UNECONOMIC IN COMPARISON WITH NORTH ELECTRIC. IN THIS EVENT, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF IBRD WOULD CONVEY ITS POSITION TO GOIC. PLEASE ADVISE.  
COOKE

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## Message Attributes

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